

Village Hall Update May 2023

For the Village Hall, last year has been extremely busy with a mixture of events, administration and maintenance.

The summer was wonderful with the Friendship Garden and all our user groups dedicating a flower bed each to the Queen's Platinum Jubilee. The Village Hall, grounds and garden looked spectacular and we would like to thank all of those who worked so tirelessly to achieve this.

We hosted the National Play Day in August with many local families making use of the bouncy castle and other games made available on the day. We ran our Christmas Market this year in December, with an amazing array of hampers for the raffle. It was well attended by everyone and stallholders were very happy with their takings, helping us to raise over £1,600.

The Pop Up Café was extremely popular and ran from the end of April to end of August. The money collected over the summer has gone into buying seeds for next year. We were particularly grateful for the support from the parents of Fontmell Under 5's and St Andrew's School who ate their way through the delicious homemade cakes. The café will run again this summer and hope as many of you as possible will support this worthy project.

With the winter fuel crisis looming we worked collaboratively with the Church and St Andrew's School to provide a warm hub. We were successful in applying for a grant from Dorset Council to fund cooked lunch between 12-2.30pm followed by cooked tea from 3.00-4.30pm. The days were fantastic and we were supported by Citizens Advice (Shaftesbury), The Blackmore Vale Practice (Social Prescribing Team), the Church, The Trussell Trust (Gillingham Foodbank) and many volunteers from Fontmell, Bedchester, Compton Abbas, Ashmore, Shroton, and Irwerne Minster. We served over 650 cooked lunches, teas and takeaways. Thanks must go out to all the cooks, cake bakers, hosts, kitchen/hall helpers and special thanks to the magnificent team from Clayesmore School who served up the teas. With such momentum created as a wider community project, the cooked teas are being continued throughout the summer via the Pop Up Café.

We have been extremely lucky that the majority of our users groups are now back up and running at full speed post COVID. We have had a good flurry of private bookings of Quiz Nights, birthday parties and weddings which have all contributed to the running costs of the hall. We have had to keep a keen eye on the electricity costs which threatened to raise our hourly hire rates. Fortunately, with Government subsidies we have managed the winter costs.

A special thanks has to go to Lisa Le Druillenec for her persistence, patience and hours of time spent applying for the Section 106 infrastructure funding for each of the projects for the Village Hall. Michael Hobbs, Peter Keen and Roger Hillman for their help, time and knowledge. We have 4 projects in the pipeline, the playground, kitchen refurbishment, new sound system and projector and acoustic treatment. Later this summer we will see the first of the projects commencing.

The Village Hall is in a good place, with a fantastic and supportive committee, well used by regular activities and popular with those in the wider community for functions. We look forward to another year of bookings and fund raising to keep the pot topped up for maintenance in future.

Rosie-Anne Yates

Chair

Fontmell Magna Village Hall